



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901-3447



In Reply Refer To:
4700 (040)

LCN 15 2007

Scoping Statement White Mountain & Little Colorado Wild Horse Management Areas (HMAs) Population Management Action

Description of Project

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rock Springs Field Office proposes to gather approximately 612 wild horses in the White Mountain Horse Management Area (HMA) and approximately 113 wild horses in the Little Colorado (HMA) (see enclosed map). Census data for these HMAs was collected in March 2007, and wild horse populations are exceeding the appropriate management level (AML) established for each HMA. The AML range for the White Mountain HMA is 205-300 and the AML range for the Little Colorado HMA is 69-100 wild horses.

The primary capture method used in the performance of gather operations would include Helicopter Drive Trapping. This capture method utilizes a helicopter to herd wild horses into a temporary trap. Gathering is scheduled to start on or about October 1, 2007, and the project may utilize a fertility control vaccine.

Relationship to Existing Plans and Documents

The proposed action is in conformance with the Green River Resource Management Plan (RMP) approved on August 8, 1997.

The Green River RMP objectives for management of wild horses are to: 1) protect, maintain, and control viable, healthy herds of wild horses while retaining their free-roaming nature; 2) provide adequate habitat for free-roaming wild horses through management consistent with principles of multiple use and environmental protection; and 3) provide opportunity for the public to view wild horses. Gathering and removal of excess wild horses from the White Mountain and Little Colorado HMAs are in conformance with the Green River RMP. Wild horse numbers, that were agreed upon, with private land owners and wild horse advocacy groups were addressed in developing the RMP. Wild horse HMAs were established or confirmed through the Green River RMP planning process.

The proposed management action is in conformance with the August 2003 Consent Decree upheld by the United States District Court of Wyoming. This is an out of court settlement agreement between the State of Wyoming and the United States Department of the Interior; and the BLM. This agreement specifies that when information is gathered that indicates that an HMA within the State of Wyoming is determined to be over the established AML, the BLM has one year from discovery to remove wild horses to the low range of AML.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

To comply with NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, which implement NEPA, the BLM is required to prepare an environmental analysis. The environmental document will serve several purposes. It will provide both the public and governmental agencies with information about the potential environmental consequences of the project and alternatives; identify all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the project and alternatives; and provide the responsible official with information upon which to make an informed decision regarding the project. The document will be prepared by an Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) of BLM resource specialists.

One essential element of the NEPA process is scoping. Scoping activities are initiated early in the process to: identify reasonable alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental analysis; identify environmental issues of concern related to the proposed gather; determine the depth of analysis for issues addressed in the environmental document; and identify potential mitigation.

Known resource issues or potential conflicts include: recreational activities such as hunting, wildlife and wild horse viewing; special status plants species; wildlife, and special status wildlife species; historic trails; oil & gas drilling and utility construction; fertility control vaccine; and livestock grazing.

This scoping statement has been prepared to describe means by which governmental agencies, the general public, and other interested parties may participate in and contribute to the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document, and the BLM encourages public participation.

Timing Requirements

The public is encouraged to participate throughout the environmental analysis process to help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives to the proposed action, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigation opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

Comments are due by **July 18, 2007**. Please submit your comments to:

Jay D'Ewart, Wild Horse & Burro Specialist
BLM, Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

Fax: (307) 352-0329

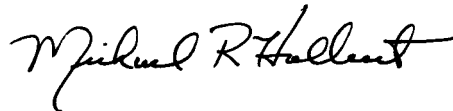
E-mail: jay_d'ewart@blm.gov

(Please include "White Mountain & Little Colorado Scoping Comments" in the subject line.)

This Scoping notice and all other future documents corresponding with this action will be posted on the Wyoming BLM website at:

http://www.blm.gov/wy/en/info/NEPA/rsfdocs/whitemtn_littlecolo.html

The web site can be accessed by the general public. The Environmental Assessment (EA) will be posted to this site after comments from the public are incorporated into it. The estimated time of posting of the EA is August 20, 2007. You may also obtain a paper copy of these documents by contacting the Rock Springs Field Office at the address or phone number above.










Michael R. Holbert
Field Manager

Enclosure

White Mountain and Little Colorado Herd Management Areas

Legend

-  Herd Management Area Boundaries
-  Freeway
-  Highway
-  County roads
-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Private
-  State

Scale = 1:500,000
7.9 Miles per inch
NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12N

0 5 10 Miles

June 2007



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